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SUBJECT: SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DDR AND  
STABILITY IN AFRICA

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The GDRC and the UN co-hosted a conference in Kinshasa June 12-14 on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs in Africa. Delegates agreed on the need to link transitional justice to ongoing programs, to focus on the needs of women and children, and to proceed with repatriation of foreign armed groups, but issued no concrete proposals. End summary.

¶2. (U) The Second International Conference on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR) and Stability in Africa took place in Kinshasa June 12-14. It was hosted by the GDRC and the UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA), and funded by Belgium and Sweden. Delegations from 22 African countries participated along with representatives of NGOs, regional organizations, and several UN offices. SRSG Swing and DRC Foreign Minister Mbasa Nyamwisi addressed the delegates, who discussed four main issues: the links between DDR and Security Sector Reform (SSR), the need for transitional justice to be incorporated into DDR, the special role of women and children in armed groups, and combatants on foreign soil.

¶3. (U) Delegations focused on the challenges specific to reintegration. Working groups developed recommendations on each of the four DDR issues. Their conclusions emphasized the need to integrate DDR and SSR strategies, create local ownership of the DDR process, and include regional partners. They also recommended separating women and children during the DDR processes and providing special support programs for them. They proposed that locally-inclusive transitional justice mechanisms be integrated in the DDR process, and emphasized the importance of political will and national and regional dialogue. Other recommendations called on governments and regional organizations to oversee existing cease-fire agreements.

¶4. (SBU) Plenary discussion focused on comparing African experiences and lessons learned as the basis of practical strategies to improve DDR and build peace in Africa. The DRC was one of five case studies participants analyzed. The GDRC delegate emphasized the necessity of follow-through and continuing foreign financial support. He highlighted the creation of integrated brigades, but conceded that the process had not successfully reintegrated former combatants into society. He stated that community development projects were needed to reconcile ex-combatants to their communities and to pursue transitional justice. He did not address recruitment and use of child soldiers, but noted that the DRC is continuing to repatriate foreign combatants.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: The conference recommendations provided an intellectual framework for dealing with DDR issues by

creating "African solutions to African problems." Practical implementation of DDR programs in Africa will require concrete strategies by the governments themselves. Delegates instead called on donors to finance African programs and did not discuss political initiatives. End comment.  
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